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SUBJECT: TURKEY URGES OIC MEMBERS TO ASSIST TSUNAMI RELIEF,
GIVES \$1.25 MILLION

REF: STATE 959

1. We delivered reftel points January 5 to Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Middle East Affairs Department Head Botsali, who is in charge of OIC-related issues. Botsali noted that OIC SecGen Ihsanoglu issued an appeal on January 1 for assistance to all OIC countries and Turkish FM Gul followed up the OIC appeal with a letter to all OIC FMs reiterating the call for assistance. Botsali said that the MFA instructed Turkey's ambassadors to emphasize the OIC's and Gul's appeals with host governments. Turkey has pledged USD 1.25 million to tsunami relief efforts. We expressed appreciation for Turkey's efforts so far and emphasized the long-term nature of the effort needed.

2. We also called January 6 on Levent Senkaya of MFA's International Organizations Department, which has been tasked with the operational aspects of Turkey's tsunami victim relief efforts, and reiterated reftel points. Senkaya reviewed the steps Turkey is taking to respond to the disaster and reported that Turkey is planning to host a meeting of the UN PermReps of OIC member states in New York in the coming weeks to take stock of pledges and urge OIC members to do more. Turkey's NTV reported that Prime Minister Erdogan may travel to the disaster region later this month.

3. Senkaya said Turkey has already disbursed its \$1.25 million pledge as follows: Indonesia - \$600,000; Sri Lanka - \$350,000; Thailand - \$125,000; the Maldives - \$100,000; and Malaysia - \$75,000. Prime Minister Erdogan issued a circular to all GOT entities to support fund-raising efforts in Turkey and among Turkish nationals abroad; and the Prime Minister's Office has established an account for the contributions. The Turkish Red Crescent has already collected private contributions of nearly \$1.5 million, which it will use to support the work of three Turkish teams already working in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand.
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